

“IF-THEN” QUICK GUIDE

Safe responding and de-escalation – what to do in a typical outburst

Code: B-N1 • **Module:** 6 • **For:** teacher • **Stage:** all stages of education • **Toolkit:** 6.1–6.3

This is a quick guide for a real classroom situation – not a diagnosis. Respond calmly, reduce stimuli, allow time.

IF the child has an outburst (shouting, throwing, hitting the desk)

- ✓ Stay calm; stand slightly side-on, not face-on
- ✓ Keep a safe distance – about an arm’s length away
- ✓ Use few words, speak slowly and lower your voice; limit eye contact
- ✗ Do not make physical contact and do not force the child out of the room*
 - * Exception: where there is an immediate risk to health or life, acting in line with your school’s or setting’s procedures.
- ✗ Do not talk a lot, do not force eye contact, do not argue
 - Why: A calm, predictable adult presence can support a sense of safety and help tension come down.*

IF tension is only starting to rise

- ✓ First take care of your own regulation: a longer out-breath, relax your shoulders, recall your anchor phrase
- ✓ Reduce stimuli; if the student has a previously agreed plan, remind them about a short break or the safe space
- ✗ Do not flood the child with questions or instructions
 - Why: Responding early is often more effective than acting at the peak of an outburst.*

IF the child needs space (has hidden away or curled up)

- ✓ Say: “I’m here. When you want to talk, let me know” and allow time
- ✗ Do not try to talk them into a conversation, do not ask more questions
 - Why: As tension starts to fall, some children gradually re-engage on their own.*

IF the child responds to contact and redirection does not increase tension

- ✓ Refer to the child’s well-known interests or a safe topic
- ✗ Do not negotiate and do not try to persuade repeatedly
 - Why: A familiar topic can help some children re-engage and lower tension.*

IF there is a risk to health or life

- ✓ Start your school’s or setting’s safety procedure: call for help and, if needed, evacuate the class
- ⚠ Physical contact – only in the case of immediate risk, in line with the procedures

⚠ For legal and procedural review. Calling for help, evacuating the class and any physical interventions must follow the safety procedures that apply in your school or setting.

! A support tool – not a diagnostic tool and not a replacement for your school’s or setting’s safety procedures. Not every strategy works for every child; watch the effect and choose the smallest appropriate action.